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A saintly devotee (*sajjana*) is *akṛta-droha*

A saintly devotee (*sajjana*) Does Not Engage in Violence

—Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhūpāda

Sajjana—Akṛta-droha (A saintly devotee Does Not Engage in Violence) was written by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhūpāda and published in *Sajjana -toṣaṇī*, Vol. 20, Issue 3 in 1917. Continuing from his previous article (*Sajjana—Kṛpālu*), Sarasvatī Ṭhākura explains how a true Vaiṣṇava is never violent to others in thought, word or deed.

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Earlier, we discussed the quality of '*kṛpālutā*' (compassion or kindness) of noble (saintly) persons.

Previously, we had described the quality of being merciful (*kṛpālutā*) in a *sajjana* (saintly devotee).

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Here, we are discussing their second quality, '*akṛta-droha*'. Generally, not causing harm or hatred to anyone through one's body, mind, or words is called '*akṛta-droha*'.

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He who is an actual Vaiṣṇava, by his own *svabhāva* (inherent nature) has no tendency towards violence internally or externally. A *vaiṣṇava-sajjana* is merciful by nature. Just as mercy is the embellishment of man, in the same way, violence is ugliness.

In reality, there is no tendency for violence either inside or outside among the genuine Vaiṣṇavas. This is because they are inherently compassionate. Just as compassion is an ornament for a person, violence is a blemish for a person.

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Vaiṣṇavas are compassionate towards others—not inclined towards violence. If someone exhibits tendencies of violence, hatred, or treachery, he can never be called a Vaiṣṇava.

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However, some people make a grave mistake in assessing this quality. They mistakenly consider the tendencies of true welfare or altruism (benvolence) as violence or treachery (*droha*, animosity).

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If the concealed truth is revealed for the sake of altruism, it should be understood as compassion.

[illegible]

The ignorant and shortsighted living entities think that the Vaiṣṇavas are envious of the materialistically inclined persons (*anyābhilāṣī-jana*), the fruitive workers (*karmīs*), and the mental speculators (*jñānīs*). But this is a mistake. The Vaiṣṇavas, being compassionate, only desire the ultimate welfare of all living beings. They do not engage in any violent behavior towards anyone.

A Vaiṣṇava is thought of by ignorant *jīvas* who lack any vision of their future reactions, to be a hater of *anyābhilāṣīs*, *karmīs* and *jñānīs*, but since he is kind he becomes impelled by mercy and desires auspiciousness for the *jīva* and does not envy them.

Those Vaiṣṇavas who, being moved by the suffering of the conditioned souls, compassionately impart the teachings of *hari-sevā* (devotional service to Lord Hari) to them, are indeed *akṛta-droha* (non-envious).

A Vaiṣṇava who becomes saddened for the *jīvas* and instructs them in devotional service to Hari, is non-violent.

On the other hand, those who are under the influence of mode of passion (*rājasa-guṇa*) and mode of ignorance (*tāmasa-guṇa*) and are prone to harm others, are called violent non-Vaiṣṇavas by all.

One who is envious of others being propelled by the modes of passion and ignorance is known by all to be a violent non-devotee.

Suddha Vaiṣṇava-svabhāva (The pure nature of a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa) does not contain these two types of violence.

These two types of violence never find a place within the inherent nature of a Vaiṣṇava.

Consuming meat, fish, and eggs is violence

Consuming meat, fish, and eggs is violence

Non-violence is the supreme duty. However, due to the craving for meat, fish, and eggs, numerous living entities are subjected to violence in large numbers.

Non-violence alone is the supreme *dharma*. We are aware of the various forms of cruelty to *jīvas*—the greed for animal flesh, the desire to taste the blood and skin of fish, the craving to eat eggs and those things still in the womb.

Under the guise of religion, some people are seen supporting violent tendencies by presenting various irrational arguments. Cruelty towards weak creatures is entirely contrary to ethics.

In the guise of *dharma*, various kinds of wicked arguments appear in order to support the violent tendencies in some people. Violence towards weak animals and tormenting weak human beings is prohibited by the edicts of the *nīti-śāstra*

(those scriptures dealing with ethics).

ସାଧାରଣ-ମାନବମାନଙ୍କ ସାମାଜିକ-ନୀତିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସାଧାରଣ ମାନବ ସମାଜର ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ-ନୀତିଗୁଡ଼ିକ। ସାଧାରଣ-ମାନବମାନଙ୍କର ଏହି ନୀତିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସାଧାରଣ-ନୀତିଗୁଡ଼ିକ-ସାଧାରଣ ମାନବମାନଙ୍କର ନୀତି।

To prevent actions that are contrary to ethics, various laws, regulations, and secular systems of jurisprudence are prevalent in civilized human society.

In order to prevent unethical activities, different types of rules, regulations and secular *dharma-śāstras* have been propagated within civilised human society.

ମାନବ ସାମାଜିକ-ନୀତିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସାଧାରଣ ମାନବ-ସମାଜର ସାମାଜିକ ନୀତି। ସାଧାରଣ ମାନବ ସମାଜର ନୀତିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସାଧାରଣ-ନୀତିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସାମାଜିକ-ନୀତିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସାଧାରଣ ମାନବ ସମାଜର ନୀତି।

Living entities, having forgotten their true nature and lacking knowledge of good and evil, violate these ethics. This leads to chaos and disorder in civilized society.

Forgetting his real self, the *jīva* crosses these ethics due to his selfish mentality, causing inconvenience to other members of society.

ମାନବ ସାମାଜିକ-ନୀତିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସାଧାରଣ ମାନବ-ସମାଜର ସାମାଜିକ ନୀତି। ସାଧାରଣ ମାନବ ସମାଜର ନୀତିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସାଧାରଣ-ନୀତିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସାମାଜିକ-ନୀତିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସାଧାରଣ ମାନବ ସମାଜର ନୀତି।

Violence cannot be stopped by any artificial means, it can only be stopped through the service of Lord Hari alone.

There is no chance of mitigating violent tendencies by artificial means. Only if the *jīva* becomes engaged in service to Hari can he can be freed from violence.

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The difference between Vaiṣṇava and non-Vaiṣṇava ethics.

ସାଧାରଣ ମାନବ ସମାଜର ନୀତିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସାଧାରଣ ମାନବ ସମାଜର ନୀତି। ସାଧାରଣ ମାନବ ସମାଜର ନୀତିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସାଧାରଣ-ନୀତିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସାମାଜିକ-ନୀତିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସାଧାରଣ ମାନବ ସମାଜର ନୀତି।

Committing violence leads to sin. A sinful person suffers from unrest. Therefore, it is not proper for non-Vaiṣṇavas to commit violence.

The violence of a non-Vaiṣṇava is a sin. If a wicked person commits sin he must experience anxiety. Hence engaging in violence is not a worthwhile activity for a non-Vaiṣṇava.

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A Vaiṣṇava does not commit violence towards any living entity. Just as a barren woman cannot give birth to a child and just as milk cannot be extracted from water, in the same way, it is impossible for a Vaiṣṇava to be violent.

A Vaiṣṇava cannot be violent with anyone. As a barren woman is unable to give birth to a son, as milk cannot be obtained from water, similarly it is impossible for a Vaiṣṇava to be violent.

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For the welfare of society, religious scriptures and experts in ethics have permitted the policy of ‘returning kindness for kindness and violence for violence’ as a means of reciprocation.

For the welfare of the society, the *dharma-śāstra* and scholars of ethics have decided that if one is benefited one should respond with favour, and if one faces violence one should respond with violence. There is no fault in this.

But the broadminded Vaiṣṇava says, “If a non-devotee commits violence to a Vaiṣṇava, the Vaiṣṇava will tolerate it silently.

However, the teachings of the liberal-minded Vaiṣṇavas are that even if violence is inflicted upon a Vaiṣṇava, he will still tolerate it silently.

At the time when the proud and arrogant *digvijayī paṇḍita* (a scholar who is victorious in debate all over the world) intoxicated with his own learning and genius, committed an act of violence against the Vaiṣṇava faith by asking the great saints Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Sanātana to write a letter conceding their defeat and his victory (*jaya-patra*), those two Gosvāmīs, with unwavering determination and smiling bright faces, wrote the *jaya-patra*

At the time when a *digvijayī-paṇḍita*, intoxicated with his scholarly prowess, collected a *jaya-patra* (a certificate of victory) from Śrī Rūpa and Śrī Sanātana, thereby committing violence against *vaiṣṇava-dharma*, then due to the exemplary characters of the two Gosvāmīs, they signed the *jaya-patra* with cheerful faces.

This is the non-violence of a Vaiṣṇava.
This is the ideal of Vaiṣṇavas' *akṛta-drohītā* (not committing enmity or violence towards anyone).

Furthermore, when Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī displayed his ideal example for non-violence by being merciful to the talented *digvijayī paṇḍita* who was envious of Vaiṣṇavas and had committed violence towards his *gurus* and instructed him not commit any further offences against the Vaiṣṇavas, then Śrī Jīva's compassionate heart did not become sullied by the defect of violence.

Again, when Jīva Gosvāmī, overcome with compassion, showed his extraordinary non-violent nature towards his *guru's* enemy, the Vaiṣṇava-hating and violent Digvijayi Pandit, and silenced him by teaching him not to commit any further offenses against the Vaiṣṇavas, at that time, the fault of violence did not even touch the compassionate heart of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī.

Mahātmā Haridāsa Ṭhākura's *akṛta-drohītā* (non-enmity) towards Rāmacandra Khāṇ.

At the time when a rich *brāhmaṇa* named Rāmacandra Khāṇ was in the process of committing violence against Śrī Hari Dāsa Ṭhākura and tried to cause trouble by sending a prostitute, then the great soul Hari Dāsa Ṭhākura did not take revenge on Rāmacandra Khāṇ. This is the non-violence of a Vaiṣṇava.

At the time when Rāmacandra Khāṇ, a wealthy Brahmin, fueled by jealousy of the fame of Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura, resorted to violent behavior towards him and attempted to corrupt him through a beautiful and youthful prostitute, even then, the heart of the great soul Haridāsa Ṭhākura did not give rise to any feelings of retaliation or revenge towards Rāmacandra Khāṇ. This is the ideal of non-retaliation (*akṛta-drohī*) of the Vaiṣṇavas.

The Non-Violence of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Vāsudeva.

The Non-Violence of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Vāsudeva.

The mercy of Bhagavān towards Jagāī and Madhāī, the compassion of Haridās Ṭhākura towards the prostitute, and the mercy of Śrīman Mahāprabhu towards Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya—in all these instances, there is no trace of violence.

There is no violence of any kind in Bhagavān's compassion towards Jagāī and Mādhāī, in the mercy of Hari Dāsa Ṭhākura to the prostitute, and Śrīman Mahāprabhu's grace on Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya.

Vāsudeva's prayer to take upon himself the punishment for the sins of all the people on earth, and Jesus Christ's (Īśā Masīha's) forgiveness and mercy towards those who crucified him—all this is a demonstration of the non-violent nature of Bhagavān and His dear associates.

Vāsudeva who personally accepted punishment for the sins of the entire earth, and Jesus Christ who showed mercy to those who were inimical even when they showed violence by putting him on the cross etc. are indications of the non-violent mentality of the beloved representatives of Bhagavān.

This is why Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has given us the verse *Taror api sahiṣṇunā* (One should be more tolerant than a tree), which Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has explained in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* as follows:

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(f anyone asks anything from him, he gives his own wealth. He tolerates the heat and the rain, and still protects others.